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## Notes and Opinions.

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**Our Lord's Attitude toward Ceremonial.**—Professor Dods closes a valuable article upon this subject in *The Expositor* for July with the following words : “ Summing up, then, what we are able to gather from the Gospels regarding our Lord's attitude to the ceremonial law ; keeping in view this zeal for the preservation of the Temple's sanctity, his observance of the passover, his injunctions to his disciples regarding sacrifice and worship ; and keeping in view also his clear enunciation of principles which explode ceremonialism, the principles of freedom from outward restraint and imposition, of the regulation of outward religious exercises by the feeling of the worshipper and not by hard and fast rules, and of the seat and source of ethical distinctions being within and not without—keeping in view, that is to say, his respect for ceremonies established by divine law and his clear insight into their temporary character, we see that Jesus was aware that in his kingdom ceremonialism must come to an end, but that he was content to lay down the principles of this abolition and leave them in their own time to accomplish practically what they predicted.” An extended and excellent discussion of this aspect of Jesus' teaching was published a few years since, entitled *Christ and the Jewish Law* (Hodder and Stoughton). With the author of this volume, Mr. Mackintosh, Professor Dods finds himself in agreement, and acknowledges indebtedness to his treatment of the subject. Mr. Mackintosh's view is embodied in this passage : “ Christ, while he not only respected the ceremonial law but was zealous for its honor, looked calmly forward to the destruction of its centre in the temple, and omitted ceremony from his positive injunction, while in such diverse points as fasting, distinction of meats, and temple dues, he indicated its incongruence with the spirit of his kingdom.” We may with much confidence regard this as the true view of Christ's teaching concerning the ceremonial law.

**Darius the Mede, and the Seventy Weeks of Daniel.**—A brief communication upon these two points, by Rev. Buchanan Blake, appears in the July number of the *Expository Times*. Exception is taken by the writer to such interpretations of Scripture as would appear to imply that the writers were ignorant of the course of history. “ When Belshazzar, who had been joint king with his father, was slain, the empire of Babylon passed into the hands of the Median reigning sovereign, Cyaxares son of Astyages, in whose name Cyrus was waging war. ‘ Darius ’ here then must be a title of empire, even as Cæsar has become so in its modern form of Tzar and Kaiser. Surely the writer must have known that no such king called Darius then reigned. To

him it was a title of office, the name being also thus used in contemporary records. Perhaps the name of the Median was not known. Dan. 5 : 31 would then read : 'And the emperor, the Mede, received the kingdom.' In 6 : 1, king or emperor would stand for Darius, and so in 9 : 1. Media and Persia are clearly distinguished in the Book of Daniel, and Darius the Mede is named as sovereign before Cyrus."

As to the seventy year-weeks of Daniel, Mr. Blake thinks it may be possible that these weeks may be working weeks, *i. e.*, weeks of six days, so that seventy year-weeks equals 420 years, exactly the length of time between Jeremiah's prophecy (30 : 2) in 588 B.C. and 168 B.C., when the desolation reached its height and end in Jerusalem. The seven year-weeks (42 years) would run from 588 B.C. to 546 B.C., when Cyrus appeared. The sixty-two year-weeks (372 years) would be from 546 B.C. to 174 B.C., when trouble began in Jerusalem under Antiochus and Jason; and the last year-week (6 years) would run from 174 B.C. to 168 B.C. From 168 to 165 B.C. we have the revolt of the Maccabees, which resulted in the purging of the temple. This was the time of the end or the close of the 1,335 days for which the faithful were advised to wait.

Mr. Blake's first hypothesis is a more probable one than his second which at least is ingenious. We must strive even against hope to solve satisfactorily the difficulties in the Book of Daniel.

**John's Method of Reckoning the Hours of Day.**—This much disputed point receives further discussion by Professor E. A. Abbott in the *Classical Review* for June. All admit that the entire New Testament, outside of the Fourth Gospel, reckons time from sunrise and sunset (*cf.* Matt. 20 : 3, 5, 6, 9; 27 : 45f.; Mark 15 : 25, 33f.; Luke 23 : 44; Acts 2 : 15; 3 : 1; 10 : 3, 9, 30; 23 : 33). But some have held that the Gospel of John adopts a different reckoning, namely, from midnight or midday. Two data are cited as supporting this usage in Asia Minor in John's time; the account of the death of Polycarp, which upon close examination supports the former view rather than the one it is cited in defense of; and the account of the death of Pionius in A.D. 250, which does not determine the usage of a hundred and fifty years earlier. In the Fourth Gospel itself there are four passages bearing upon the subject: (a) 1 : 39, in which there is nothing conclusive either way, though the usual New Testament reckoning seems the more probable. The term "day" had a popular usage loosely applied to hours before or after sunset, as we use the term now. (b) 4 : 6, where it is more probable that the time was midday than six P. M., inasmuch as so many things take place immediately in connection, and the day was presumably a short winter one (*cf.* John 4 : 35). The narrative suits a winter noon-tide. (c) 4 : 52, where the most probable supposition is that the father started from Capernaum very early in the morning, and after eight or nine hours traveling to Cana reached Jesus about one P.M. The cure did not occur until after that time, so that the servants waited until the next morning

before setting out, and the father did the same, so they met the second morning. It was also presumably in the winter time. (d) 19: 14, the hour when Pilate pronounced sentence upon Jesus. As the context here stands, the statement is incompatible with Mark 15: 25, which fixes the crucifixion at the third hour rather than the sixth. But the omission of this Mark datum from Matthew and Luke indicates some early obscurity as to the exact hour. To take the "sixth hour" of John here as six A.M., also raises extreme difficulties, for the Roman court could not be held before sunrise, six A.M., and yet a score of events connected with and subsequent to the trial before Pilate, including the trial before Herod, must all be crowded into a half-hour's time, or the writer could not speak of the sentence as being pronounced at the "sixth hour." This unusual method of reckoning time in the Fourth Gospel, then, does not satisfy the problem—there are certain difficulties in applying the Jewish mode of reckoning time to this last passage, but the other mode only raises others, and in the case of the first three passages no other reckoning than the common Jewish method is necessary or desirable. Strong evidence would be needed to make us believe that John departed from the Synoptic method of reckoning the hours of the day, and at least the evidence for the different method as stated by Westcott in his commentary on John is insufficient to prove such a departure.

**"The Interrogation of a Good Conscience toward God," 1. Peter 3: 21** (*'eperotēma*).—None of the current explanations of this word "interrogation," with its clause, seem to me fully to satisfy the connection. As to "inquiry," "request," or "*interrogation* of a good conscience," whether the genitive be taken as that of subject or object, no one of them represents any baptism known to the Scriptures; while the plain object of the apostle is to set forth the baptism that "now saveth." "Interrogation" (R. V.) further offends the English reader by its novelty and strangeness. Perhaps Archbishop Leighton makes out the strongest case for this word: "The word is judicial, alluding to the interrogation used in law for the trial and execution of processes. It is the great business of conscience to sit, and examine, and judge within; to hold courts in the soul. The word intends the whole correspondence of the conscience with God, and with itself as towards God or in the sight of God. This questioning or inquiry of conscience, and so its report or answer unto God, extends to all the affairs of the soul."

Quite satisfactory to the English reader is the rendering of the A. V., "the *answer* of a good conscience," because by taking the genitive as one of apposition it readily admits of an explanation that suits the connection. But the commentators deny us this or any meaning of *'eperotēma* that will make the clause yield this sense. "It signifies simply asking, inquiry," says Frommüller; yet practically it is the meaning of the A. V. which he attaches to it; "Adhering to the idea of asking, the thing asked may be conceived as follows: How shall I rid myself of an evil conscience? Wilt Thou, most

holy God, again accept me, a sinner? Wilt Thou, Lord Jesus, grant me the communion of Thy death and life? Wilt Thou, O Holy Ghost, assure me of grace and adoption, and dwell in my heart? To these questions the triune Jehovah answers in baptism, Yea." But is not the efficient "Yea" of the triune Jehovah the baptism that saveth? "The antithesis of the putting away of the filth of the flesh suggests a reference to the moral import of baptism, to inward spiritual cleansing," is Fronmüller's own remark at the beginning of his discussion.

That Peter passes by the simple and more common *'erotēma* (request, interrogation), suggests that he had in view a use of the compound word which met his need. Have we not such a use in the Septuagint of Dan. 4 : 17? There this Greek word is employed as the equivalent of a Hebrew word meaning a subject of inquiry, a cause in law, and hence a decree. In this passage the rendering of the A. V. and R. V. ("demand") seems unsuitable, as there is no reference to any one on whom the demand is made. The angel is "crying" a decree or edict which was the outcome of the deliberations of the heavenly court or council of the watchers, the holy ones, on the case of Nebuchadnezzar. If Peter had this passage in mind, then the A. V. is in effect correct. Baptism, in its meaning and intention, is, according to Peter, the authoritative answer of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to all who turn obediently and with inquiring heart toward God, seeking his offered salvation and in its efficient administration (Mark 1 : 8) imparts or is the good conscience.

In support of this reference and interpretation I may add: (1) Commentators who have overlooked this case claim to have found other evidences in this epistle of mental association on the part of the writer with the book of Daniel; *e. g.*, "Peace be multiplied unto you," 1 : 2 with Dan. 4 : 1 and 6 : 25; and "the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you," 4 : 14 with the incident in Dan. 3 : 16-30. (2) It represents the baptism of the new covenant as the cleansing sought and promised under the old, cf. Ps. 51 : 7-10; Ezek. 36 : 25-27. (3) It connects it with the teaching of John and Jesus, with which Peter was familiar, cf. John 1 : 33, Acts 1 : 4, 5; 11 : 16. (4) It agrees with Peter's teaching elsewhere, Acts 2 : 38; also 10 : 47, with 11 : 15-17. Here the apostle regards the outpouring of the spirit as the definite decision from the side of heaven of the question started in his own mind as to the relation in which the gentiles, now being called, should stand to the promise and to the New Testament church. In other words, it was heaven's edict settling formally and openly his course as to their baptism. No one could now forbid water. (5) It exhibits the substantial agreement between Peter and Paul in their teaching on baptism, notwithstanding the wide diversity in their modes of expression. Both recognized the obligation attaching to the human administration, but associated saving efficacy with the divine administration, cf. Eph. 5 : 25; Tit. 3 : 5, 6; *et al.*

Clifton, N. S.

J. D. McG.